



Manonmaniam Sundaranar University

*DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION
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M.A ENGLISH (FOURTH SEMESTER)

THEATRE ART

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THEATRE ART

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TEXTBOOK:

- ❖ Sangeetha, K and A. Selvalakshmi. *An Introduction to Theatre Art*, New Century Book House (P) Ltd., 2015.

REFERENCE BOOKS:

- Balme, Christopher B. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
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UNIT I

DRAMA AS A PERFORMING ART

Drama is called a performing art. It is the most immediate, intense and communal of all literary works. It is immediate because it takes place in front of an audience, intense because what is said is concentrated into a few hours. It is communal because it is enjoyed and judged by a group of people who are specially gathered to view them. The elements that go to make up a theatrical performance are atmosphere, staging, actors and performance. Of these the atmosphere of the play is characterized by characters, action and language. The nature of the character constitutes the atmosphere of the play-whether a play is light hearted or serious.

Action creates atmosphere- murder and battle makes the play serious and tragic. Eaves dropping, disguise and treachery produce an atmosphere of comedy and merriment. Imagery plays a mild role in the creation of atmosphere. In Macbeth, recurring images related to blood, clothes, darkness and night constitute the tragic atmosphere. A good performance of a play translates atmosphere into staging and acting. The physical conditions of a stage determine or add to the critical performance. Modern theatre uses the following three types of stage.

Proscenium Stage

This is a traditional stage which includes a proscenium arch from which hangs the curtain. There is an acting space behind the arch. The arch forms a window through which the action of the play is seen. This is called 'picture-frame stage' or 'fourth-wall theatre.' This theatre is suitable for realistic settings and portrayal of social habits of everyday living. E.g.: *The Importance of Being Earnest* on the stage.

Apron Stage

This stage projects out into the body of the theatre, so that the audience sits on the three sides of the acting area. Some theatres that have apron stage have no proscenium arch but actors retain these features. This stage is also called thrust stage. It stresses the reality of the theatre. When someone in the audience can look across the stage to another part of the audience, he/she is aware of being in a theatre play. E.g.: *A Man for All Seasons*. In this play the common man (actor) who acts as a chorus as well as taking a number of parts, could talk to the audience and then join in the action of the play.

Theatre in the Round

A third type is a variation of the apron stage. It is theatre in the round. It looks like a

circus ring surrounded by the audience except for the entrance and exit point. Harold Pinter's play *The Home Coming*; *The Caretaker* can be effective in the round.

The Stage Scenery

It is the responsibility of the designer to choose appropriate sets such as indoor / outdoor, rich exotic setting, domestic set up, elaborate or plain sets in tune with the demands of the play. For instance, the Roman scenes must be shown differently from the Egyptian scenes in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. So, to create appropriate atmosphere, choice setting is essential.

Stage costume

Costume, like scenery, should be appropriate to the play expressing the particular character of an individual and contribute to the atmosphere of the play. E.g.: Hamlet in mourning costume while the rest are shown celebrating a royal wedding. Hamlet's costume contributes to the brooding, inward-looking prince.

Stage Lighting

It should be decided whether a bright or dark or subdued light is needed to add to the atmosphere of the play. E.g.: Hamlet requires subdued lighting. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* requires a different light pattern, the wonderful sunrise. The scene requires the light to gradually grow stronger and stronger when the lovers wake up to reality to signify the return of sanity and harmony. Light should gradually grow.

In addition to costume, scenery and lighting, the actor's age, size and voice do a lot in contributing to the performing aspect of drama. The age of the character has a bearing upon the interpretation of the play. E.g.: Malvolio is portrayed as an old man. Similarly, actors contribute to the performance. The role of Othello is played by a big man and Iago by a small man indicating that a big heroic figure of evident nobility is brought to a state of inhuman jealousy by a slight, spare man (Iago). Voice should be appropriate to the comedies. It is very important for voice to match roles. A character in general and in tune with the nature of the play should speak either in deep or soft voice or slow or heavy voice or a rich romantic voice.

The effect of an actor's presence, the use of the pause, the contribution of music and dance, the effect of spectacle - all add to the performing nature of drama. The presence of a character on stage is effective even if he says little or nothing. E.g. Pinter's opening scene is highly intriguing. The character appears, turns and exits without saying anything, but it arouses

one's curiosity Equally, pauses indicate that something will happen. Pauses cause expectation and tension. E.g.: Harold printer's *The Home Coming*.

On stage music has a transforming effect upon a scene. Dance adds a physical excitement that is very difficult to convey in words. Dance is an expression of harmony and concord. So, in tune with the nature and mood of the songs that one reads in drama, the music director has to select an appropriate tune that will match them. The successful productions of Shakespeare have used the rhythms of pop music in rendering his song.

Drama is a performing art. It is not just a matter of words. So, the vigorous physical movements of dance make an important contribution to the play. One should decide on the type of dance to suit the play, whether a director requires rapid and lively dance, slow and languid dance, smooth and graceful dance etc. E.g.: The dance in *Romeo and Juliet* is a courtly dance. The dance in *Winter's Tale*, denotes rustic celebrations.

A play when performed on stage provides opportunities for spectacle. Spectacle refers to the total impact of words, action, dance and music. The wedding masque in *The Tempest* is an example. The richly costumed characters moving with delicate, stylized steps and being accompanied by mysterious music stand for the spectacle that a play can offer its audience. The inclusion of ghosts and lights as per the requirements of the play add to the effect of the play.

Fights bring home the immediacy of drama rather than fights on TV, which often are tame, in comparison with the sight of the real people wielding real weapons. Sometimes, the dramatist makes the fight scene to be more savage and violent. All these factors contribute to the performing aspect of drama.

RELATION BETWEEN DRAMA AND THEATRE

Drama is a socially charged aesthetic medium which functions as a social institution essentially rendering the value system of the society. It is also used as propaganda literature which discusses social problems and for healing the festering sores and maladies of contemporary society. According to Marjorie Boulton, drama is, "Literature that walks and talks before our eyes." The excellence of drama over other genres of literature is due to its performance aspect which has three dimensional functions of converting the text into sights, sounds and actions on the stage. There is a great difference in reading a play. One has to role-play actor, director and audience in his / her mind simultaneously, apart from being a reader.

Drama is a composite art involving a playwright, the actors and the audience in a shared experience on the stage. The performance is a visual medium; a play takes birth twice in its life-first when it is performed on the paper and second when it is staged.

The most significant aspect of drama is performance through conflict and action for wholesome effect. Theatre here means only the performance of drama and the other arts like opera, cinema, puppet show, shadow play, etc. Theatrical experience takes the audience on a journey into themselves. Consequently, it turns out to be a communal art which is directly related to life, society and times facilitating every individual to realize the inherent meaning and destiny of life.

Bernard Shaw declares in his preface to *Man and Superman*: “Free from falsehood and perjury, drama, as an expression of transpersonal self-unfolding nature of the mind of the dramatist is also an instrument of illumination of the individuals participating as observers.” Theatre interprets life from a socialist point of view. It brings about multifarious functions beneficial to society right from entertainment, social sanitation, community health, mass communication to raising conscience and consciousness.

It represents the evolution of human being from darkness to self-discovery. The history of drama shows a thematic gradation from Gods to kings, from kings to ordinary men. The eye of the modern dramatist is on the relationship between man and his universe. The primary concern is to awaken the slumbering conscience of his fellow human beings to the existing conditions of the society which is sick. Theatre should not be a mere imitation of the brighter side of life or a display of a colourful pageantry alone, but should bring to light the darker side of life. A play deals primarily with human condition, man’s humanity to man, his vicarious guilt and existential responsibility. Theatre thus explains to people what they are and how better they could become. It also sharpens their sensibilities, intellect and sense of values. So, the business of theatre is not dissimulation but revelation.

THE ROLE OF THEATRE

Theatre plays a significant role in society, serving multiple purposes beyond mere entertainment. Here are some of the key roles theatre plays:

1. **Storytelling and narrative:** Theatre provides a platform for sharing stories, experiences, and perspectives, fostering empathy and understanding.
2. **Social commentary and critique:** Theatre often addresses social issues, sparking discussions and reflections on topics like inequality, justice, and morality.

3. Emotional expression and catharsis: Theatre offers a safe space for exploring emotions, providing a release valve for audience members to process their feelings.
4. Community building and engagement: Theatre brings people together, creating a shared experience that fosters a sense of community and connection among audience members.
5. Personal growth and development: Theatre can be a transformative experience for both performers and audience members, promoting self-discovery and personal growth.
6. Cultural preservation and innovation: Theatre helps preserve cultural heritage through traditional performances and also innovates by experimenting with new forms and styles.
7. Therapeutic benefits: Theatre has been used as a therapeutic tool for healing, stress relief, and skill development.
8. Education and learning: Theatre can be an effective tool for teaching history, literature, and social skills, making learning more engaging and interactive.
9. Social change and activism: Theatre has been used as a powerful medium for raising awareness about social causes, inspiring change and activism.
10. Entertainment and leisure: Theatre provides an enjoyable and engaging form of entertainment, offering a break from daily routines.

In summary, theatre plays a multifaceted role in society, extending beyond entertainment to encompass education, social commentary, personal growth, community building, and more. Its impact is felt on both individual and collective levels, making it a valuable and essential part of human culture.

THE NEED FOR PERMANENT THEATRES

The need for a permanent theatre is created as much by the needs of the audience as by the needs of the actors. While permanent theatres may allow for greater comfort for the actors and greater sophistication in the production a very important function is to contain the audience within a space that allows the actors to control their attention. This idea of containment is also extremely important economically.

If the audience is expected to pay admission, then there has to be a clear demarcation of territory. We shall therefore examine the need for the creation and design of permanent theatres:

1. The audience must be able to see and hear.
2. Their entrance and exit must be monitored, and perhaps also their position.

3. There must be maximum facilities for controlling their imagination by lighting and setting.

It is just as important to hear a play well, as to see it well. Those who attend a play are called an audience, and where they sit or stand is called the auditorium, both words deriving from the Latin word meaning to hear. Although nowadays we speak of going to see play, it has been just as common to hear a play.

Visitors to the Ancient Epidauros Greek theatre at Epidauros are treated to the experience of its quite remarkable acoustics. An actor on the stage, who whispers or drops a single coin on the ground, can be heard distinctly from the farthest seat, which is hundreds of feet away.

The theatres in Ancient Greece were all outdoors. Some compensation for the diffusion of sound was provided by the actors wearing masks, which channelled and amplified the sound of their voices. It is nevertheless surprising that a theatre can hold an audience of thousands, and still have every sound audible.

For the audience to see well, distance is, again, an important factor. One of the most effective designs for creating good sightlines is the fan-shaped auditorium to be found in many Greek and Roman theatres. The Greek theatres were often carved out of a hillside, rows of stone seats being hewn out of the rock, while Roman ones were built from scratch in imitation of the Greek.

In European city theatres, from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, the rich and powerful members of society have been seen to have the best seats. Entrance into the theatre has therefore not been by general admission, but to particular sections or seats. The way to better parts of the house has been barred as securely as the way from steerage to first-class on a passenger ship. However, different sections of the auditorium have at different times and places been considered the best seats. In the early European public theatres, the area near the stage was often left for standing room, or for cheap benches. But during Victorian times, the general comfort of the auditorium was improved, and the ground level was filled with comfortable and expensive seats.

Although a stage surrounded by audience on all sides is possible and often powerful, players have more often taken advantage of any arrangement that gives them a special background, especially if it allows for entrances and exits into and out of the audience's view.

A wooden screen, as in the Tudor hall and the Chinese theatre, a stone façade, as in Greek and Roman theatres, a curtain strung across a booth stage- all these provide early models for the façades built into later theatres, behind the platform. In fact, changes in use of that scenic background and the actors' position in relation to it are an important part of the story of European theatres, as they developed from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century.

The second spatial feature to consider is the division between the acting area and the auditorium. The actors may be divided from the audience by the height of a platform, by an orchestra pit, by a line of footlights, by a balustrade, by a boundary of light, by a curtain or scene drop, or by none of these. Conventionally, the actors are separated from the audience, even if it is only by a line on the floor, a line that could be real or imaginary.

Backstage and front-of house

The areas beyond the stage and auditorium, though not so basic to the art of theatre, are nevertheless important parts of the design or conversion of space. The actors must dress and have somewhere to wait, the technical staff and their equipment must be housed; scenery and costumes may need to be stored and maintained; rehearsal rooms may be needed; and there may be offices as well.

UNIT II

TYPES OF THEATRE

In general terms theatre is on the one hand, a group of people getting together to perform a play; on the other hand, a group of people getting together to see it.

History of the Theatre:

Theatre from the Greek means 'theasthai', "to view" or "to see" whence 'theatron' or 'seeing place' may be defined not only as a structure in which dramatic performances are given, but as the sum of all the arts required for the production of a dramatic or imitative action. These include acting, directing, stage lighting, theatre architecture, theatre costume and makeup, machinery and special effects, and dramaturgy or playwriting. Other mimetic performing arts such as opera and ballet are closely related to the theatre in different periods and cultures.

Origin of the Theatre:

The theatre originated in the cultures of primitive societies, whose members, it is thought used imitative dances to propitiate supernatural powers. A shaman, priest or medicine man taught complicated dance steps and led these ritual dance-dramas to ensure the Earth's fertility, to expel evil spirits that caused disease, and to force the souls of the newly dead to depart the world of the living. The priests and performers in these dance-dramas wore masks, which sometimes represented the spirits invoked.

As knowledge of natural phenomena increased, drama ceased to be exclusively ritualistic and also became an educational tool, especially in initiation ceremonies that acquainted the young with tribal culture. A later development was the enactment of legends of gods and tribal heroes. Such dramas were also performed in early civilized societies. In Egypt, for example, dramas dealing with the god Osiris continued to be produced until at least as late as the 5th century BC.

GREEK THEATRE

The history of European theatre begins with the Greeks, whose annual festivals in honour of the God Dionysus included competitions in tragedy and comedy. According to tradition, the first of these dramatic forms evolved from choral songs concerning the death and resurrection of Dionysus. This occurred about the middle of the 6th century B.C, when Thespis of Icaria, in a drama of his own composition, impersonated a character and engaged the chorus

in dialogue, thereby becoming both the first playwright and the first actor. Thespis won first prize in the initial tragedy competition held at Athens in 534 BC and is also credited with the introduction of masks, which were thereafter a conventional feature of Greek and Roman theatre.

The tragedians Aeschylus and Sophocles later added a second and a third actor to tragedy, and about the beginning of the 5th century BC comedy was given written form by Epicharmus of Syracuse and was also admitted to the festivals. The ancient chorus was retained as an integral part of Greek drama and eventually consisted of a standard number of members: 15 in tragedy and 24 in comedy. In a satyr play, a short burlesque that dramatists were expected to submit along with their tragedies, the chorus comprised either 12 or 15 members. All the roles were played by men: women were not allowed to perform in the Greek theatre.

The early Greek playwrights not only wrote and frequently acted in their plays but also served as directors and choreographers; some may also have composed their own music (Greek tragedy was intensely musical). Sophocles is said to have been a scene designer and Aeschylus invented the tragic costume. Tragic actors wore a variety of cloaks over the 'chiton'; the 'cothurnus' or tragedian's boot which in later periods became exaggeratedly elevated by the addition of a wooden platform to the sole and the helmet-like mask with attached wig in which the forehead elevation was proportional to the social status of the character represented. Characters in old comedy were usually costumed in short chitons heavily padded in front and behind and wore grotesque masks and stuffed phalluses. With the arrival of New Comedy in the later 4th century BC these features were discarded and comic characters became more respectably dressed.

The original Greek theatre at Athens was simply a large circle known as the Orchestra ("dancing place"). Spectators sat on seats set into the southern slope of the Acropolis. It was not until about 460 BC that a skene, or stage building, was added at the rear of the orchestra. The actors then made their entrances and exits through this structure, although the acting was still confined to the flat orchestra. A limited amount of scenery, painted on panels attached to the skene, may have been used at this time. Special effects included the eccyclema, or "wheeling out" machine, a wagon or perhaps a turn-table on which tableaux were displayed, and a crane by which actors representing Gods could be flown above the stage. The playwright Euripides was fond of both these devices, and his contemporary Aristophanes ridiculed his use of them in several of his comedies. By the 4th century BC the Greek theatre had become a

professional institution with specialists responsible for the various aspects of theatrical art. In the next two centuries, during the Hellenistic Age, the physical structure of the theatre continued to evolve, the most notable innovation being the addition of a raised stage.

Visitors to the Ancient Greek theatre are treated to the experience of its quite remarkable acoustics. An actor on the stage who whispers, or who drops a single coin on the ground, can be heard distinctly from the furthestmost seat, which is hundreds of feet away. The science of acoustics is still imperfectly understood, but this theatre, scooped out of a hillside, has a cave-like quality which directs and contains the sound. Modern methods of amplifying sound electronically have their beginnings in more rudimentary kinds of amplification, including modification of the shape and proportion of the theatre, use of materials that conduct sound well or, in other places, materials that are soundproof, and methods that a skilled actor can use to project and amplify his/her voice. The theatres in Ancient Greece were all outdoors. Some compensation for the diffusion of sound was provided by the actors wearing masks, which channelled and amplified the sound of their voices. It is nevertheless surprising that a theatre can hold an audience of thousands and still have every sound reach the audience. There are also occasional dead spots to be found in some theatres, places where, for no reason that can be discovered, the voices from the stage simply do not reach adequately.

For the audience to see well, distance is, again, an important factor, but there are other considerations as well. Geometry can discover the sightlines, that is, whether or not each member of the audience has an unobstructed view of the stage. One of the most effective designs for creating good sightlines is the fan-shaped auditorium to be found in many Greek and Roman theatres. The Greek theatres were often carved out of a hillside, rows of stone seats being hewn out of the rock, while the later, Roman ones were built from scratch, in imitation of the Greek. In the rest of Europe, and in the East, this fan-shape was not used. In the nineteenth century, Richard Wagner, was inspired by the comprehensive nature of Greek theatre. In his theatre at Bayreuth, he imitated the sweep of seats fanning out round the Greek stages.

SHAKESPEARE'S THEATRE

We can classify Elizabethan theatres into two main groups - those within the London district and those located throughout the English countryside. The theatres within the London district can be further classified as play houses, inn yards, and private theatres. The plays of Shakespeare during his lifetime were performed on stages in private theatres, provincial

theatres, and play houses. His plays were acted out in the yards of inns and in the great halls of the London Inns of Court. The most popular theatre of Shakespeare's times were the 'Globe' and the 'Blackfriars.' The theatre of those days was a small round wooden structure. Shakespeare refers to this in *Henry IV* as this wooden 'O.' The play house was open to the sky and the performances were given by daylight. The place in front of the stage was called 'pit' and the groundlings or the riff-raff remained standing in the pit, passing loud comments on what was going on the stage. The galleries were situated in rows round all the three sides of the stage and these seats were occupied by the richer sections of the audience. The young gallants often sat on the stage itself exchanging jokes with the actors.

The Elizabethan stage was divided into four parts. The front stage jutted far into the pit. The front stage was used for a scene in some wood, field or garden. Street brawls took place there and battles were also fought there. The space behind the pillars on the front stage was called the back stage. The back stage served as a room in a tavern, a palace, or an office. It was here that Othello attended to his office papers. There was a door at either end of back stage. One door was used for the entrance and the other for the exit of the actors. As an actor, on entrance, had to walk some distance to reach the front stage, time had to be allowed for this in the play itself. For instance Iago would exclaim, "Look, where he comes," and then continue with his soliloquy till Othello reached the front. Shakespeare displays considerable mastery of stage-craft in the management of his entrances.

Behind the back stage, there was another stage called the rear stage. The door between the entrance and the exit led to this rear stage. The rear stage served a variety of purposes. It served as Prospero's cell in *The Tempest*, the canopy of Desdemona's bed in *Othello*, Juliet's tomb in *Romeo and Juliet* or as the shelter for poor Tom in the storm in *King Lear*. Over this rear stage there was an upper stage which was used as balcony in *Romeo and Juliet* and as Cleopatra's monument to which the dying Antony is raised to receive his last kiss from Cleopatra.

The Shakespearean dramas had no curtain and so a scene began with the entrance of actors and ended with their exit. There being no curtain, clearing the stage at the end of a scene had to be done in full view of audience. Shakespeare sees to it that provision for clearing the stage is made in the dialogue itself. In the comedies, at the end of a scene the characters generally dance off the stage. In the tragedies instructions are given to servants to carry the dead bodies that litter the stage.

Thus, Antony carries away the dead body of Julius Caesar in *Julius Caesar*. A scene in *Hamlet* comes to an end with Hamlet dragging away the dead body of Polonius. At the end of *Much Ado about Nothing* orders are given to the piper to play and all quit the stage, dancing. As there was no front curtain to be brought down at the end of a scene, Shakespeare used rhymed tags to indicate end of a scene.

Shakespearean stage was bare. There was not much painted scenery. The absence of scenery became an advantage in the hands of Shakespeare. Shakespeare could cast a spell on his audience with his poetry and shift the scene from one country to another country. In Antony and Cleopatra, the characters roam all over the vast sprawling Roman Empire. Of course, all this constant shifting of the scene results in a certain looseness of construction and diffusion of effect. But this is inevitable in a play dealing with the lives of Kings and queens who sway the destinies of far flung empires. The absence of scenery makes it easy for Shakespeare to shift the place of action from country to country in history plays.

Shakespeare, because of lack of scenic aids, had to use the dialogue as a means to indicate the place and time of action. Thus, in *Twelfth Night* Viola asks: "What country, friend, is this?" and the captain tells her: "This is Illyria, Lady". Similarly, Hamlet asks: "What hour now?" and Horatio tells him "I think it lacks of twelve." On the modern stage, lighting and scenery are used to indicate natural scenes. But Shakespeare used his own poetic descriptions to evoke pictures of natural scenes. Thus, Hamlet evokes a picture of sunrise with the description of "the morn in russet mantle clad stands tip toe on yonder hill." It is for this reason that Shakespeare's works abound in descriptions of natural scenes.

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

The Globe Theatre was constructed in 1599. It stood next to the Rose, on the south side of the Thames, and was the most elaborate and attractive theatre built. The Globe was the primary home of Shakespeare's acting company beginning in late 1599, and it is a possibility that *As You Like It* was written especially for the occasion.

The Globe Stage

The stage had two primary parts. The outer stage was a rectangular platform projecting into the court yard from the back wall. Above it was a thatched roof and hangings but no front or side curtains. The inner stage was the recess between two projecting wings at the very back of the outer stage. This stage was used by actors who were in a scene but not directly involved in the immediate action of the play, and it was also used when a scene took place in an inner

room. Underneath the floors of the outer and inner stages was a large cellar called “hell,” allowing the dramatic appearance of ghosts. This cellar was probably as big as the two stages combined above it, and it was accessed by two or more trap-doors on the outer stage and one trap door on the inner stage. Actors in “hell” would be encompassed by darkness, with the only light coming from tiny holes in the floor or from the tiring-house stair way at the very back of the cellar.

The Tiring-House

Rising from behind the stages was the tiring house, the three-story section of the play house that contained the dressing rooms, the prop room, the musician’s gallery and connecting passage ways. The tiring-house was enclosed in curtains at all times so the less dramatic elements of play production would be hidden from the audience. Two doors on either side of the tiring-house allowed the actors entrance to the stage. Sometimes an actor would come through the “middle door,” which really referred to the main floor curtains of the tiring-house that led directly onto centre stage.

THE ABSURD THEATRE

Absurd is a term derived from the existentialism of Albert Camus presented in his essay “Le Mythe de Sisyphe” (1942) and is applied to ‘The Theatre of the Absurd’ consisting of the body of plays written primarily in France from the mid-1940s through the 1950s. Camus wrote about the human situation in a world of shattered beliefs and speaks of man: “In a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light man feels a stranger... This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity.”

To understand the Absurd as a serious form of literature, one has to be familiar with the preoccupations and anxieties of the post-war modern world. The basic assumptions of the previous ages have been discarded as illusions. Religious faith declined and was substituted by progress and nationalism. The Absurdist regarded themselves as loaners and outsiders isolated in their private world. They were sensitive in projecting thoughts and feelings of their contemporaries. Their works were characterized by illogical situations, unconventional dialogue and minimal plots to express the apparent absurdity of human existence and metaphysical anguish. The word ‘absurd’ meant for them ‘out of harmony,’ incongruous, unreasonable and illogical. Eugene Ionesco defined it as ‘devoid of purpose.’ Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre conveyed their inability to find any rational explanation for human life with meaningless, confusing, hostile situations in an indifferent world. The theatre of the

Absurd believes that reality is meaningless and senseless. Man has to face it in all its senselessness and have the courage to laugh at it.

For the Absurdist, reality being meaningless, there is no God and man's life is reduced to a mere circular progress from nothing to nothing. According to them the true field of battle is inside us, in the Unconscious. Hence the theatre of the Absurd attacks us below the threshold of consciousness using mainly visual devices and language in a stage of fragmentation. They mainly concern themselves with the doomed individual, the man in despair and distress, alone and bitter in the wide world. It was the British scholar Martin Esslin who first used the phrase "Theatre of the Absurd" in 1961 referring to several contemporary dramatists such as Samuel Beckett and French playwrights Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, and Arthur Adamov. In their drama they departed from the conventional Western theatre by rejecting logical characterization, language, and plot. For example, Beckett's *En attendant Godot* (1953) translated as *Waiting for Godot* (1954) presents two tramps waiting for a character named Godot. They are not sure who Godot is. They spend day after day waiting for him in uncertainty. Contemporary playwrights whose works show the influence of the theatre of the absurd include British dramatists Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard, American dramatists Edward Albee and Sam Shepard.

THE EPIC THEATRE

The term Epic Theatre, used by Brecht for the first time in 1926, did not originate with him, although it is generally applied to his work today. It was already in the air in 1924 when Brecht moved from Munich to Berlin and was first used in connection with revolutionary experiments by director Erwin Piscator. Many playwrights and composers produced plays and musical compositions in the 1920s which have since been labelled epic and others have followed their footsteps.

Origin of the Epic Theatre

Epic theatre was a theatrical movement arising in the early to mid-20th century from the theories and practice of a number of theatre practitioners, including Erwin Piscator, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold and most famously, Bertolt Brecht. Although many of the concepts and practices involved in Brechtian epic theatre had been around for years, even centuries, Brecht unified them, developed the style and popularized it. Epic theatre incorporates a mode of acting that utilises what he calls 'gestus.' The epic form describes both a type of written drama and a methodological approach to the production of plays. Its qualities of clear

description and reporting and its use of choruses and projections as a means of commentary earned it the name 'epic.' Brecht later preferred the term 'Dialectical theatre.'

Goals of the Epic Theatre

One of the goals of epic theatre is for the audience to always be aware that it is watching a play: It is most important that one of the main features of the ordinary theatre should be excluded from the engendering of illusion. Epic theatre was a reaction against other popular forms of theatre, particularly the naturalistic approach pioneered by Constantin Stanislavski. Like Stanislavski, Brecht disliked the shallow spectacle, manipulative plots and heightened emotion of melodrama. Brecht's own social and political focus departed from surrealism and the theatre of cruelty, as developed in the writings and dramaturgy of Antonin Artaud, who sought to effect audiences psychologically, physically and irrationally.

Bertolt Brecht's Concept of Epic Theatre

The technical advances alone were enough to permit the stage to incorporate an element of narrative in its dramatic productions. The possibility of projections, the greater adaptability of the stage due to mechanization, the film, all completed the theatre's equipment, and did so at a point where the most important transactions between people could no longer be shown simply by personifying the motive forces or subjecting the characters to invisible metaphysical powers. To make these transactions intelligible, the environment in which the people lived had to be brought to bear in a big and "significant" way. This environment had of course been shown in the existing drama, but only as seen from the central figure's point of view, and not as an independent element. It was defined by the hero's reactions to it.

The stage began to tell a story. The narrator was no longer missing, along with the fourth wall. Not only did the background adopt an attitude to the events on the stage by bit screens recalling other simultaneous events elsewhere, by projecting documents which confirmed or contradicted what the characters said, by concrete and intelligible figures to accompany abstract conversations, by figures and sentences to support mimed transactions whose sense was unclear but the actors too refrained from going over wholly into their role, remaining detached from the character they were playing and clearly inviting criticism of him.

The spectator was no longer in any way allowed to submit to an experience uncritically by means of simple empathy with the characters in a play. The production took the subject matter and the incidents shown and put them through a process of alienation, the alienation that is necessary to all understanding. When something seems "the most obvious thing in the world"

it means that any attempt to understand the world has been given up. What is “natural” must have the force of what is starting. This is the only way to expose the laws of cause and effect.

The dramatic theatre’s spectator says: Yes, I have felt like that too – just like me – it’s only natural – It’ll never change – the sufferings of this man appal me, because they are inescapable – That’s great art, it all seems the most obvious thing in the world -- I weep when they weep, I laugh when they laugh.

The epic theatre’s spectator says: I’d never have thought it – that’s not the way – That’s not the way – That’s extraordinary, hardly believable - It’s got to stop – The sufferings of this man appal me, because they are unnecessary – That’s great art; nothing obvious in it – I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh.

Difference between Traditional Theatre and Epic Theatre

Dramatic Theatre	Epic Theatre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implicates the spectator in stage situation. Wears down his capacity for action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns the spectator into an observer, but arouses his capacity for action.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides him sensations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forces him to take decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides Experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides Picture of the world.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spectator is involved in something. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is made to confront something.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argument.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instinctive feelings are preserved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought to the point of recognition.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spectator is in the thick of it, shares the experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spectator stands outside, studies the human being as the object of the inquiry.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The human being is taken for granted. He is unalterable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is alterable and able to alter.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes on the finish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes on the course.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One scene makes another. Growth. • linear development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each scene for itself. Small episodes make a complete scene.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man as a fixed point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man as a process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason

THE MULTIPURPOSE THEATRE

A multipurpose theatre can be reconfigured to change the actor-audience relationship and the seat count. By moving large architectural elements, the one-room form of the concert hall can be transformed into a two-room theatre-an auditorium and stage with a proscenium. Side wall seating towers can be positioned to narrow the room, or otherwise change its proportion. Often the orchestra floor can be levelled and the seats removed to create a large, flexible flat floor area. Many of the theatre forms described here can be designed with this flat floor capability. It was a common feature of eighteenth and nineteenth century opera houses.

The contemporary multipurpose theatre is commonly found in medium to large US cities and occasionally elsewhere around the world. These proscenium theatres are designed to accommodate a range of activity-symphonic music, opera, musical theatre, ballet, and touring productions. Seat count is in the range of 1,200 to 2,400 with an upper limit of about 2,800 seats. The auditorium form is heavily influenced by the acoustic requirements for symphony, while the stage house is designed to meet the needs of opera and musicals. These rooms are designed with the ability to change configurations (especially in the forestage area) and to adjust the room acoustics to the needs of each performance type.

DESIGNING FOR A PARTICULAR THEATRE

The designer of any production has to take account for the strengths and weaknesses of the particular theatre in which a play will be housed. Most dramatic works are written in an episodic form with irregular jumps forward (or sometimes backwards) in time. These changes in time may be accompanied by changes in place and the nature and extent of such time and place changes are a major component of visual style. The stylist's options available to a stage environment are virtually unlimited, from a bare stage to a complex setting so realistically constructed that it could almost be lived in. Objects may be selected to identify the actor in a special place or to stress its universality. They may be symbolic or atmospheric or cynical or satirical. They may place audience imagination under strict control or allow it free reign.

Lighting

Lighting often has to form a stylistic bridge between near naturalistic acting and the non-naturalism of the scenic environment. In a room lit by daylight, the light through the windows may include some direct rays from the sun. But a large component of the light (in many cases all of it) will be reflected light from the sky and from the surfaces of buildings outside the window. If we try to light a realistic stage room by placing a single large source

outside the window, there will be light for the actors to see each other but it will have neither the quantity nor quality to help them to make contact with the audience. Naturalistic light can be simulated by making it appear to be motivated by sources in the sky and by real light fittings which are either in view or presumed to be just out of sight. But as a back up to these obvious sources many spotlights are required to project the effect of reflected light in a sufficiently exaggerated way to help to project the actors. For the audience to accept such lighting as realistic, it must appear to conform to the logic of natural light in terms of its direction, balance, colour, shadows, etc. Light can be used selectively to help concentrate the audience attention on chosen areas of the stage action - light can be used to conceal as well as to reveal. It can be used to help create atmosphere.

Physical Movements

Physical movements can be used to change the stage environment by repositioning elements of scenery already present and / or by replacing, removing or adding other elements. These changes may take place within sight of the audience or be hidden behind a curtain or other form of screening. For scenic movements in a vertical plane, the obvious alternative to flying them above the stage is to sink them below. Most Victorian stages were equipped to do this to a greater or lesser degree. The most common traps were the corner traps downstage left and right, intended not for scenery but for instant appearance of actors. More upstage and central there was usually a rectangular grave trap inspired by Hamlet.

THE EASTERN THEATRE

Theatre is the branch of performing arts concerned with acting out stories in front of an audience using combinations of speech, gesture, music, dance, sound and spectacle - indeed any one or more elements of the other performing arts. Theatre takes such forms as plays, musicals, opera, ballet, illusion, mime, classical Indian dance, Kabuki, improvisational theatre, pantomime and art-house theatre. The origins of Western theatre in ancient Athens may have been influenced by eastern rituals and myths. The Greek developed ritual into theatre, while the Eastern (Egypt, Byzantine and Asian-Indian) never went beyond ritual.

Asian Theatre

Sanskrit Drama - India

There is no single Asian theatre. There are a number of theatrical forms in Asia. The classical Indian drama originated from the folk theatres such as pageants, rituals and mimes. They had their own traditional pattern to the delineation of story, characters, language, dance

and music. The plot dealt with political matters or Godly event. They did not deal with social life. The history of drama everywhere in the world shows a thematic graduation from Gods to kings and from kings to ordinary man. Sanskrit drama dealt with Godly events. India is one of the few countries which can boast of an indigenous drama, unaffected by any foreign influence. The dramatist Bhasa, thirteen of whose works have been recovered and published, is traditionally considered to have been the founder and “Father” of Indian drama.

The origins of Sanskrit drama reach back as far as 500 BC and are closely linked with the sacred scriptures, the Vedas. It is believed that Brahma wrote a fifth Veda as a sacred text on dramatic theory and stage practice. This was passed on to humans in the form of the Natyasastra. The Indian theatre emphasised the transcendental power of acting, the performer’s ability to raise the audience’s consciousness. The closest comparison with European costuming was lavish, allegorical robes worn by actors in court masques. Kathakali dancers still appear in India and they wear apparel which bears little or no realism. They represent a God or Goddess.

Japanese Theatre

The art of theatre spread from India to China and Japan. In Japan, the two traditional forms of theatre are Noh and Kabuki. The costumes of Noh theatre are of a brilliance, elegance and luxury unparalleled elsewhere. In the Noh theatre, the stage is quite small, about eighteen square feet. It is important to make every tiny move carry its full impact. The Irish poet and playwright William Butler Yeats was inspired by the experience of Japanese Noh theatre for its clarity.

Kabuki, (traditional Japanese puppet theatre) involves types of plays based on historical events or moral conflicts in love relationships.

- a. Jidai-mono historical plays
- b. Sewamono domestic plays
- c. Shosagoto anthropomorphic dance pieces

Ka - Music / Song; Bu - Dance; Ki - performance / skill

Beijing Opera - China

The Chinese had been performing theatre for more than a century. Actors were hired to perform in Buddhist temples for agricultural festivals from the 7th century BC. Beijing opera has dominated Chinese theatre since the 1850s and is the principal form of Chinese national theatre.

Signs and Symbols in Eastern Theatre

The use of signs and symbols to represent objects is a part of ordinary life, as well as a theatrical device. While western realism developed the making of a replica into a highly sophisticated art, Eastern tradition instead made an art of the symbolic substitute. The earliest country to develop this method of scenic art was China. The conventions of the Peking Opera were derived from these earlier periods. The Noh plays too are performed against a permanent screen without additional scenery. The Kabuki theatre has developed a more lavish style of scenery. In the West the theatre has most often followed a realistic style of presentation, but the theatre of the East remains intensely symbolic, requiring considerable sophistication on the part of its viewers. Traps are used to raise and lower actors and scenery. The 18th century rapid shifts of setting became possible with the revolving stage – a feature eventually adopted by western theatre.

Non-Conventional Theatre

Theatre sharpens people's sensibilities, intellect and sense of values. It expresses the dynamic relationships between text and theatre space, characters and their conflicts representing the evolution of human being from darkness to self-discovery. But theatrical activity takes place in many areas of life besides the professional, amateur and educational theatre worlds. Theatre arts and the outdoors combine to produce refreshing, non-conventional theatre. The audience and actors alike are taken on a scenic hike while scenes from a production are performed along the way. This aims to promote health, family activity, culture and preservation. This type of theatre engages a wide audience by providing encounters with great theatrical works in intimate non-conventional theatre settings. It is a laboratory of experimental scenic arts in non-conventional spaces. Iwan Brioc is director of the Republic of the Imagination, a film and theatre production company that explores the possibilities of context-oriented theatre. Context-oriented theatre is a new approach to applied theatre that Iwan has developed through twenty years of working in the field.

FOLK THEATRE

The folk or traditional arts of India have from ancient times been used for moral, religious and socio-political purposes. Rarely have they been resorted to for pure entertainment although they are often packed with spontaneity, boisterousness and humour.

Advantages

The folk theatre is close to the hearts and minds of the people. Its familiar format and

content, as also the local and colloquial dialects used, make for clarity in communication. Folk media, unlike the electronic media, involves and often invites audience participation. The Keerthana, Alha and various street theatre genres are good examples of this. The folk art forms satisfy our innate need of self-expression, for moral instruction combined with entertainment and for the dramatic and the lyrical. The folk media preserve and disseminate in a lively manner, the traditions and culture of our forefathers.

Folk Theatre Forms:

Tamasha

The Tamasha is an extremely lively and robust form of folk theatre of Maharashtra, going back to over 400 years. The most celebrated patron of this folk form was Bajirao II, the last of the Peshwas, who introduced professional women singers into it for the first time. Another important development was the introduction of the jester, nicknamed Songadya who acted also as the 'master of ceremonies'. In the main, Tamasha (which means 'fun') is pure commercial entertainment, with the star performer being the female artist who has to sing the favourite songs for the patrons.

Powada or Powda

The Powada of Maharashtra is a folk ballad form which shot into prominence during the 16th century. It is dramatic in nature, and is dominated by tales about the events of history. It is sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments like daph, tuntune, and Majira, generally by a group with a leading voice. While singing, the leader indulges in dramatic gestures, describing the heroic deeds, which lend effect to the whole performance.

The Keertana

The Keertanas (on Harikatha or Harikeertan as it is sometimes called) is a kind of concentrated drama, a monodrama in which one gifted actor enters swiftly a whole series of characters and moods. The ancient sage Narad is believed to have invented and practised the form with great success. It is believed to have spread from Maharashtra to Karnataka and Tamilnadu about 150 years ago. It is such a potent weapon in social education that Lokmanya Tilak is reported to have said that, if he were not a journalist, he would have been a Keertakar.

Yakshagana

Yakshagana is 'the song of the Yaksha', the most popular folk drama of Karnataka, first performed in the 16th century. Its themes are from the Bhagavata but with a lot of local flavour. As with other Indian folk drama genres, Yakshagana is full of song and repartee. The

narrator here is known as the Bhagavata who sings verses and exchanges witty remarks with the players and handles the cymbals and songs. Besides, there is the jester, Hanumanayaka, as also kings, villains and demons all elaborately and frightfully made up. Girish Karnad's play Hayavadana employs the Yakshagana folk form.

Dashavatar

The Dashavatar is a religious folk theatre form of South Konkan. The Dashavatar is a re-enactment of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, and the story of the Lord and his devotees. It is generally performed within the precincts of a temple, for it is regarded as an act of worship. Male artists alone are allowed to play various roles, even those of women.

Nautanki

The Nautanki is a North Indian folk drama form performed on an open and bare stage. It got its name perhaps from the charming Rani Nautanki of Multan. Like other Indian folk drama forms, the nautanki has a simple dramatic structure comprising small units linked by a narrator. Music is of prime importance in this folk drama, for it provides the pace and tempo required. The main musical instruments used are the makkara (kettle drum) and the dholak.

Ramlila and Raslila

The Ramlila celebrates the story of the Ramayana, while the Raslila focuses on the exploits of Lord Krishna and his lover, Radha. The Ramlila is enacted all over north India in September and October during the Dashara festival; the Raslila, a dance drama, is performed on various occasions in Vrindaban, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Manipur and Kerala.

Jatra

Singing interludes by the chorus (juri), loud and light pitched acting and rhetorical flourishes characterise the form even today.

Bhavai

The Bhavai is the foremost folk theatre form in Gujarat: a stylised medieval dramatic form. The Ranglo is the stock-character who is the jester or clown of the play, while the Naik is the Sutradhar or manager with whom he carries on a bantering dialogue. Like the court-jester, the Ranglo enjoys the privilege of poking fun at local leaders, of making satirical comments on current affairs.

Therukoothu

Tamilnadu, the traditional media include puppetry Puravi Attam (Horse Dance), Nizhal

Attam (Shadow Dance), Theru Koothu (Street Drama), Kazhai Koothu, Kalatchem and Villupattu. The Therukoothu is the best known of these. The therukoothu is Tamilnadu's street theatre bringing together the classical literary forms-prose (iyal) music (isai) and drama (natakam).

Puppetry:

Puppetry has fascinated children and adults of all climes for centuries. In India, four styles of puppetry have proved popular in different parts of the country.

Sutradharika: Puppets are manipulated with long strings in Rajasthan, Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Rod Puppets: Rod puppets are large in size and are fixed to heavy bamboo sticks which are tied to the puppeteer's waist.

Shadow Puppets: Shadow puppets are flat figures made from tanned hide and painted with vegetable dyes. They are illuminated from behind so that their shadows fall on a transparent cotton screen. The stories projected by shadow puppets are generally taken from the Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Hand Puppets: Glover or hand puppet shows are most popular in Orissa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The free use of the puppeteer's strings lends a rare strength and vitality to the movements of a puppet's head and arms, and the wrist lends flexibility and power to a puppet's body. Hand-puppets are fashioned on Kathakali characters in Kerala, and are played in almost the same manner.

Street Theatre

There has been an explosion of 'street theatre' activity in India in the eighties and nineties. One study estimates the existence of about 7,000 'street theatre' groups in different parts of the country, with the largest number in West Bengal, Andhra, Tamilnadu and Kerala. The main groups involved in this type of popular theatre activity are 'social action groups' (SAGs), health and agricultural extension workers, student activists, political parties, religious reformers and women's organizations. The most influential proponent of Indian street theatre has been Badal Sircar, who argued for a 'theatre of commitment.' Sircar's work stands out for its emphasis on 'body language' on dialogue directed straight at the audience and on the involvement of the audience. It is to be noted that street plays are culture-specific and employ local folk theatre forms, local songs and dances, and the local dialect.

For instance, 'Sahiar', a women's group in Baroda, uses Gujarati folk forms like bhavai and garba, and the Jan Natya Mandali (of Andhra Pradesh) uses local forms like 'ogerratha'. Women's groups in Delhi, Bombay, and in rural Andhra Kerala and Maharashtra have used street theatre to raise social consciousness on issues like suttee, dowry, sex discrimination in education and employment, exploitative advertising and discriminatory laws of inheritance and divorce. In Kerala the KSSP has employed street theatre to popularize science and literacy.

URBAN THEATRE

Urban Drama takes a more socially realistic stance than the traditional drama genre. Often in these dramas the city/environment itself is almost presented as a character that influences the protagonists as much, or more so than any other element of the film. These films study or depict the effects of race, multi-culturalism, labour, over-population, filth, chaos and corruption on their central characters.

A type of urban drama originated from the United States in the early to mid-90s, which features aspects of primarily 'Black' culture, including music, street gangs, racial discrimination, poverty, and the problems of young black men coming of age or struggling in a predominantly white society.

History

Urban Theatre can be sourced to the early 40's in which it was used as a tool to educate/teach the audience (as exhibited in films like 'The Grapes of Wrath' (1940) 'Citizen Kane' (1941) which attempted to show the effects of depression). Dramatic films focused on complex character relationships and development.

The popularity of Urban Drama itself is said to have stemmed from the fact that the advent of these films coincided with the first rush of people moving from the country to the city-so there has always been a fascination with inner-city life. Urban Dramas set out to prove that city life is becoming increasingly difficult and 'raw' and defining it is equally as tough. Parallel to the idea that cinema's fascination with Urban Drama as a genre stemmed from the first wave of country people trying to adjust to the more modern culture of the inner-city, early urban dramas also tried to focus more on the complexities of an urban lifestyle.

Stories (such as Midnight Cowboy, 1969) usually centred on the idea of a country person trying to bring the country with them thus influencing the environment around them or ultimately being changed themselves by the influences of society. These stories had just enough

to allow for both humorous representations and extremely dark social commentary. As urban society becomes more diversified, the term 'urban' becomes increasingly harder to define. This is probably the reasoning behind the scattered issues tackled in contemporary Urban Dramas. The Urban Drama definition at the birth of the genre is lost in today's contemporary films, arguably for the better, as the emergence and popularity of 'hood films' (which has now become the standard Urban Drama just as 'Black' music is Pop music now) added the extra dynamic of realism with topics more focused on social issues like racism and integration and thus appealed to a broader and 'more grounded' audience.

Contemporary Urban Dramas – A Closer Look

Ideas of escaping 'the ghetto' and with standing the negative temptations of the concrete jungle serve as the most prominent/ traditional themes within the 'Urban Drama' genre. Other contentious ideologies exploring the Urban Theatre include the importance of friendship (including betrayal), romance, racism and the effects of living multi-culturally and the consequences of a material-centric modern society. These are usually explored through sub-plots rather than being the main foci of the actual film. The concept of the fairy tale happy ending is a notion that is heavily played with in Urban Dramas. These films often kill off the main character or jail them at the end to reinforce that sense of realism. Life does not always end happily and humans are fragile.

THIRD THEATRE

The term 'Third Theatre' is used to define a new theatrical phenomenon that emerged in the late 1970's. The first encounter for third theatre took place in Belgrade in 1976. A short document written by Eugenio Barba serves as a manifesto for third theatre. Third theatre was explored by the prominent Bengali playwright and director Badal Sircar. Not satisfied with first or rural theatre and second or proscenium theatre and ever anxious to break away from the barrier between actor and spectator, he formulated his own which he calls third theatre. Stressing on the basic fact that the theatre is a live experience, he has done away with heavy costumes, spotlights and other paraphernalia endemic in spacious rooms, sharing space with audience. He has also dispensed with the practice of selling tickets by accepting only voluntary donations.

In 1995, Badal Sircar conducted a theatre festival on the pavements of Calcutta, involving theatre groups that sprang out of his ideology. Badal Sircar was a dramatist with a didactic purpose. He had a social commitment and it reflected in his plays. His 'third theatre'

was formed imbibing ideas from the traditional and folk theatre. Throughout the play, we search for something useful as in the conventional plays and it reflects the writer's attempt to find something meaningful in life.

Third Theatre: Process of Social Change

A new generation of young people in the 1970's began to conceive of theatre not so much as a means and end as a part of process of social change but rather as a way of life. Small fringe groups emerged developing their own pattern of rigorous daily training, designing, co-operative performance and structure. Many had no previous experience in the theatre or any formal theatrical education, but nevertheless perceived theatre work as central to their existence. In the 1980's the phenomenon underwent certain significant changes as an alternative from theatre group developing their didactic processes. In some cases this has led to the establishment of theatre laboratories or training programmes where the practical work also includes an investigation into related fields such as theatre history and theatre anthropology.

OTHER THEATRES IN VOGUE

Epic Theatre:

Epic Theatre is a genre pioneered by Bertolt Brecht, which emphasizes historical, political, and social themes. The movement was a response to the conventional theatre of the time, which sought to provoke emotional reactions from audiences and maintain dramatic illusion. Instead, Epic Theatre aimed to provoke critical thinking and engage audiences intellectually. Epic Theatre is its use of historical and political narratives to reflect on society and encourage social change. The stories in Epic Theatre are typically vast in scope, often covering large spans of time or large groups of people. Brecht's use of alienation effects (also known as *Verfremdungseffekt*) aimed to remind the audience that they were watching a play, thus preventing them from becoming too emotionally involved. Instead, the goal was for the audience to critically reflect on the issues presented.

Documentary Theatre

Documentary Theatre focuses on the use of real-life testimonies, documents, and factual material to recreate actual events or historical moments. This form of theatre is deeply rooted in realism, but unlike traditional realism, it specifically aims to present the audience with actual truth or testimonies. The genre emphasizes non-fictional content such as interviews, speeches, court transcripts, or media reports and reconstructs them in theatrical form. Often,

documentary theatre addresses social issues, political events, or historical occurrences, providing an immersive way to engage with truth-based storytelling. One of the most famous practitioners is Harold Pinter, whose works such as *The Homecoming* examine the realities of family life and societal violence. Another key figure is Verbatim Theatre, which uses direct quotations from individuals in its scripts, offering audiences an unfiltered, often raw portrayal of real-life events.

Physical Theatre

Physical Theatre is a genre where movement, gesture, and visual storytelling take precedence over traditional text-based performances. This form emphasizes the body's role in conveying meaning, often blending elements of dance, circus, and acrobatic performances. Actors use their bodies as the primary tool of expression, engaging in intricate movements and exaggerated gestures to convey emotions and narratives. While spoken dialogue may still be used, the focus is primarily on non-verbal communication. This style of theatre is known for its high-energy, dynamic performances that engage the audience's senses and often blur the lines between dance, theatre, and visual art. Companies like Complicité and DV8 Physical Theatre are notable for their work in this genre, which often tackles themes of identity, human interaction, and the physicality of life.

Immersive Theatre

Immersive Theatre represents a break from traditional proscenium-arch theatre, where the audience sits in front of a stage. Instead, it engulfs the audience in the experience, often placing them in the midst of the action. In this form, the line between the performer and the spectator is blurred, and audiences are frequently invited to interact directly with the environment or even participate in the performance. In immersive theatre, the audience often becomes part of the narrative, and the boundaries of the space are completely transformed. Performances might take place in non-theatre spaces like warehouses, abandoned buildings, or even outside in public spaces. Companies like Punchdrunk (known for productions like *Sleep No More*) have pushed this genre forward, creating atmospheric, interactive worlds where the audience moves through the environment, uncovering different facets of the story as they go.

Postdramatic Theatre

Postdramatic Theatre rejects the traditional structure of a linear narrative, in which characters develop within a plot, leading to a resolution. Instead, postdramatic theatre focuses on non-narrative forms, where the emphasis is on visual, sonic, and physical elements rather than dialogue and traditional plot development.

Theatre in this genre often incorporates multimedia elements, including video, soundscapes, projections, and non-linear imagery. This style of theatre is deeply experimental, often blurring the line between theatre, art installation, and performance art. Heiner Müller and Klaus Luchs are examples of playwrights whose works belong to the postdramatic category, experimenting with fragmentation and abstraction in the storytelling process.

Site-Specific Theatre

Site-Specific Theatre takes place in non-traditional spaces, where the location itself is integral to the meaning and atmosphere of the performance. In this genre, the chosen location is not just a backdrop but an active component of the story, helping to create a unique contextual experience for the audience.

Performances might occur in abandoned buildings, outdoor spaces, museums, or even private homes, where the space's history, architecture, and ambiance play a crucial role in the storytelling. The key is that the location itself adds to the meaning of the play, and the production is often tailored specifically to the physicality and atmosphere of that site. Companies such as Forced Entertainment and Theatre de Complicité have pioneered this genre, transforming unconventional settings into vibrant stages for performance.

Interactive Theatre

Interactive Theatre actively involves the audience, making them an integral part of the performance. This genre uses various methods to encourage audience participation, such as direct address, audience choices, and technology integration (like voting systems or live social media feeds).

The goal is to break down the fourth wall between performer and spectator, giving the audience a more personalized and active role in the narrative. Interactive theatre might include scenarios where the audience chooses what happens next in the performance or becomes a character within the story. Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* and Immersive Theatre productions are prime examples of interactive theatre, where the audience can freely roam the space and influence the unfolding drama.

Environmental Theatre

Environmental Theatre focuses on creating a connection between theatre and the natural world, often exploring ecological and environmental themes. This genre places significant emphasis on sustainability, and many productions aim to use eco-friendly practices, such as recycled materials for sets and costumes or minimal environmental impact in stage design.

The stories often deal with themes such as human interaction with nature, climate change, or ecological destruction. The performance itself may also serve as a form of environmental activism, aiming to raise awareness and inspire change. Notable companies that have embraced this form include Theatre for the Environment and Green Theatre, both of which focus on promoting ecological sustainability through their performances.

Intercultural Theatre

Intercultural Theatre is the fusion of different cultural traditions, practices, and aesthetics to create a hybridized form of performance that transcends geographic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. This genre celebrates the rich diversity of global theatre and seeks to explore and blend the artistic languages of multiple cultures.

By combining elements from Eastern and Western traditions, traditional and contemporary practices, ritualistic and experimental forms, intercultural theatre creates new forms of expression that reflect the globalized nature of the modern world. Companies such as Theatre of the Oppressed and Complicité have incorporated intercultural elements into their works, creating performances that resonate with a global audience.

UNIT III

FUNDAMENTALS OF PLAY DIRECTING

CONCEPT

The creative artist must first form in his mind the image of an external object to which he attaches an impression, a thought, or any other product of memory or imagination. This product is the concept, the creation, the subject. It will have resulted from a deeply felt emotional experience in his own life-an experience, not peculiar to himself, but one that is universal and, in drama especially, common to a mass of people. The dramatist may conceive a human being or character; he may review an event or story; or he may have an idea. Whatever the concept, it must deal fundamentally with man in relation to greater forces, such as the laws of God and man.

TECHNIQUE

Sheer imagination alone, however, is incapable of arousing emotional stages in others. The artist, besides feeling his concept, must know his materials in order to reproduce it. The artist's emotion expressed in whatever material-clay, granite, paint, word or musical sound-will, without form, fail completely to fulfil his purpose of stirring the spectator or audience. The pure reproduction of the concept will not make the art product complete.

If this were sufficient, all that the playwright need do would be to reproduce nature or a part of life literally, photographically and minutely. But to do this is not art. Literal reproduction on stage never succeeds in evoking emotional reactions of a profound sort. Theatre artists must rearrange the parts of actual life into a whole that may perhaps seem to be a life reproduction but in reality is not. Art is not nature's creation; it is man's.

The rearrangement of the concept or nature is achieved through technique, known in drama as form or structure. Each art has its own technique based upon fundamental principles. In all writings on the arts, these principles are the most difficult to describe, the most intangible to make clear, the most contradictory to arrange in order. Time alone has developed them; trial and error have made them factual. At the beginning of any art there were few principles, if any: artists have added them by degrees and from experience. Those principles are generally accepted as being common to all arts: unity, coherence, emphasis and selectivity, proportion, rearrangement and intensification.

PHYSICAL BALANCE

Balance is weight against weight, so the stage must be thought of as a large balance scale with the fulcrum at any point on an imaginary line running perpendicular to the footlights and dividing the stage into two halves, right and left. This imaginary centre line, running from downstage to upstage is as long as the depth of the setting. Balance, then, is definitely the balancing of this scale in order to obtain equilibrium between the two halves of the stage.

Balance can be achieved by arranging the design elements to give a sense of restfulness, stability, or equilibrium to the design. There are two types of balance: symmetrical and asymmetrical. In symmetrical balance, if you were to draw a line down the centre of a design, the objects on the left side of a design would be the mirror image of the objects on the right, as shown in Figure. In asymmetrical balance, the left side of the design does not mirror the right. Balance is achieved by creating a pattern in which the juxtaposition of the various design elements creates a sense of restfulness, stability, or equilibrium.

In this illustration, the white circle on the left of the design is dynamically balanced by the larger expanse of dark space to its right. This type of “non-mirror” balance presents many more ways for the designer to create dynamic balance through the manipulation of the elements of design.

DEMONSTRATION

- The director’s ability to clearly and effectively demonstrate what they want the actors to do.
- Showing, rather than telling, the actors how to perform a specific action, movement, or gesture.
- Using physical demonstration to clarify the director’s vision and help actors understand their characters’ physicality and movements.

Some key aspects of physical balance and demonstration include:

- Spatial awareness: Understanding the physical space and how to use it effectively.
- Kinesthetic awareness: Understanding the physical movements and gestures of the actors.
- Visual composition: Creating a visually appealing arrangement of actors on stage.
- Communication: Clearly demonstrating and communicating the director’s vision to the actors.
- Collaboration: Working with actors to develop their physicality and movements.

By mastering physical balance and demonstration, directors can effectively communicate their vision and bring the play to life in a visually engaging and dynamic way.

THE DIRECTOR AND THE STAGE

A theatre director or stage director is a director/instructor in the theatre field who oversees and orchestrates the mounting of a theatre production (a play, an opera, a musical, or a devised piece of work) by unifying various endeavours and aspects of production. The director's function is to ensure the quality and completeness of theatre production and to lead the members of the creative team into realising their artistic vision for it. The director therefore collaborates with a team of creative individuals and other staff, coordinating research, stagecraft, costume design, props, lighting design, acting, set design, stage combat, and sound design for the production. If the production he or she is mounting is a new piece of writing or a (new) translation of a play, the director may also work with the playwright or translator. In contemporary theatre, after the playwright, the director is generally the primary visionary, making decisions on the artistic concept and interpretation of the play and its staging. Different directors occupy different places of authority and responsibility, depending on the structure and philosophy of individual theatre companies. Directors utilize a wide variety of techniques, philosophies, and levels of collaboration.

Choreography

Choreography is the art of designing sequences of movements in which motion, form, or both are specified. Choreography may also refer to the design itself. The word 'choreography' literally means "dance-writing" from the Greek word 'choreia'. A choreographer is one who creates choreographies by dance movements. Hopefully in the first production meeting, the Stage Director, Musical Director, Choreographer, and Set/Lighting Designer(s) will be present to discuss the overall vision/direction for the show which is ultimately decided by the Stage Director.

A choreographer should discuss the following points before creating the movements.

1. Where the actors will be at the beginning of the musical introduction.
2. Where the actors should end up physically at the conclusion. (The director may not yet have answers for this but this information is important for creating seamless transitions in your choreography. Knowing it sooner rather than later is always helpful as you create choreography)
3. How the characters have been affected or changed by the conclusion of the song. Does it move the plot forward?

4. Your interpretations of the musical style and how this affects movement quality. (Do you see it as athletic? A soft shoe? Your feelings about what types of experience or abilities the actor should have (Be prepared to adapt these once the chosen actor is in place).

Work closely with the Musical Director on song tempos (what works best for the song, dance, and singers). Remember, when creating choreography, that the movement should not inhibit the vocalist's ability to sing what is required (particularly in solo work).

The Scenic Effect:

There are three elements used in creating the visual effect required in the theatre. They are the scenery, properties and lighting.

Props

The word 'Properties,' usually shortened to props, is the theatrical term for the countless objects that need to be brought on to the stage and used during the course of the play, ranging from a cigarette lighter in a modern play, to a weapon such as sword, dagger or gun, or an important object like the olive branch in the story of Noah. Props can be magical things: talismanic, transformational. We get that Shakespeare wouldn't be Shakespeare without Desdemona's handkerchief or Macbeth's dagger.

Props can be actual things being told of in the story, or can be symbols, physical metaphors used to indicate something else. It is not always necessary to distinguish between a prop which is a costume accessory, such as a fan, and a prop which is part of the scenery, such as a cushion or a stool. But when it comes to putting on a production, it is very important to know who is responsible for acquiring and placing the prop.

The stage manager assigns a prop manager with whom actors deal directly during rehearsals. Props help an actor to make the story clearer or a character more convincing, so they must be used in ways that led the audience see them without being distracted by them. Much of this depends on how good the props are, but the actor's contribution is very important

Lighting

Lighting is one of the elements of theatre which has changed most over the centuries. It began its history with candles and oil-lamps and now uses the resources of sophisticated electrical equipment, which directs and controls the light in a million different ways. It can also be used to create or enhance the scenic effect.

There are basically three ways of creating the setting and locations required by the story:

1. To use the real thing.
2. To construct a scenic illusion of the real thing.
3. To use signs and symbols of the real thing.

Real things are unsuitable for a theatrical performance:

- Weapons, whether swords or guns can be real but must not be harmful.
- Real food is often surprisingly inappropriate on stage, taking too long to eat or getting caught in the throat, so substitutes have to be found.
- A real mirror is often a distraction and has to be dulled with soap.
- An oil-lamp can be real if it does not have to be lit.

Sometimes real things would be inconvenient on stage – but audience found the novelty enjoyable.

Functions of Lighting:

Selectivity: The simple ability to see what is occurring on stage. Any lighting design will be ineffective if the viewers cannot see the characters, unless this is the explicit intent.

Different Types of Lighting

- **Revelation of Form:** Altering the perception of shapes onstage, particularly three-dimensional stage elements.
- **Focus:** Directing the audience's attention to an area of the stage or distracting them from another.
- **Mood:** Setting the tone of a scene. Harsh red light has a totally different effect from soft lavender light.
- **Location and Time:** Establishing or altering position in time and space. Blues can suggest night time while orange and red can suggest a sunrise or sunset. Use of mechanical filters ("gobos") to project sky scenes, the moon, etc.
- **Projection:** Lighting may be used to project scenery or to act as scenery onstage.
- **Plot:** A lighting event may trigger or advance the action onstage.
- **Composition:** Lighting may be used to show only the areas of the stage which the designer wants the audience to see, and to "paint a picture".
- **Colour:** Warm Colour, such as amber, red, and orange create feelings of intimacy and safety. Cool colours, such as blues and whites create feelings of isolation and distance

The Scenic Illusion:

From the Renaissance to the beginning of the 20th century, scenic artists in Europe sought out different ways of creating an illusion of visual reality on the stage. In painting the discovery had been made that geometry and trigonometry showed a way of giving the visual illusion of three dimensions by two-dimensional means. Sebastiano Serilo, an Italian developed three settings which could be adapted for a vast number of scenes in plays. The art of scene-painting was developed to a high point-they created an exterior and an interior setting, where the distant landscape was painted on a backcloth, while the middle and foreground were shown on wing drops and borders that framed the action and concealed the offstage areas at the same time.

Signs and Symbols:

The use of signs and symbol to represent objects is a part of ordinary life, as well as a theatrical device. The facility to believe in a representative object does not depend on the object being an exact replica of the real thing. While western realism developed the making of a replica into a highly sophisticated art, Eastern tradition instead made an art of the symbolic substitute.

Modern Lighting in the Theatre:

At the very beginning candles and oil-lamps had been used in many ingenious ways to illuminate and to create special effects in the theatre. In the early 19th century gas lighting was introduced. It was quickly followed by limelight, a dazzling light made by heating quicklime to incandescence. Then electric lighting was introduced in the late 19th century, making illumination both efficient and effective.

Shade and Darkness:

Just as important as providing light is creating shade and darkness where and when needed. In the 19th century the auditorium was darkened, increasing the vividness of the stage action allowing the spectators almost to forget their own existence. Scenes should be ended by a black. out instead of by lowering the curtain. Very useful for a quick ending such as is needed for a comic sketch with a punch line, or a moment of dramatic suspense. Previously, colour and texture had been indicated mainly through skilful painting. Special effects, through using fire, moving lights or beams filtered through silk, had been hampered by the difficulty of controlling naked flames. Three-dimensional, architectural scenery offered scope for creating very different effects with one set. One early 20th century director used a flight of stairs for his set.

Scenic Art:

Scenic Art was not divorced from the other visual arts. New developments in painting and sculpture were paralleled in the theatre. Realism ceased to be the only important scenic style. The impressionistic quality of light, the increased interest in psychology, in dreams and the unconscious, made the creation of mood, atmosphere and underlying meaning as important as a representation of the environment. At the same time, the separation of the two main theatrical traditions, European and Asian, now began to be bridged. Asian theatres began to introduce more realism, sometimes retaining their older traditions alongside the European style, while western theatres introduced decorative and symbolic scenery and props. Thus, the role of the stage designer became increasingly important in stimulating and controlling the spectators' visual experience.

UNIT IV

COMPONENTS OF ACTING

Acting skills are closely connected with associated skills such as dancing, singing, story-telling and so on. One of the most dominant approaches to the art of acting reached its zenith at the end of the 19th century in Russia. Constantin Stanislavsky's aim was to find ways in which an actor could create and recreate truth and freshness in a performance. He believed that the achievement of theatre was to create the temporary illusion that, what the audience saw and heard were real events. The actor therefore makes much effort to observe and express accurately and to envisage the character as a complete person.

The actor's art is to distil a spiritual and emotional experience into voice and movement. He must also bring the audience to a sense of the climax of the play and then to its reflective conclusion. In acting a play, it emphasizes the pretence, the knowledge shared by audience and actors, that a play is being presented. The audience was not expected to believe in a fiction, but to share in the play as a reminder of the truth. Therefore, it was important to pass on wisdom from one generation to the next - creation, birth, growth, the passing on of wisdom, death and regeneration, etc. Such events were provided by myths. Early myths were linked with drama in two ways - through stories and rituals. The play is not over until action is complete, whether or not physical violence has been shown. It also provides a healthy outlet for aggressive feelings.

GESTURE

The language of gesture, often called body language now, is so eloquent that it has an art form of its own, the art of mime, pantomime or silent acting, where no words are used and often no props or scenery. Just as expressive, in a different way, are hands which can develop their own language. Sign language is partly imitative and partly conventional, with no direct connection between sign and the meaning. In ordinary life, there is great variety in the meaning of gestures, which have developed both naturally and artificially, in different parts of the world at different times.

From military ceremonial - for example, various forms of salute - to different ways of being vulgar, cultural develop their own vocabulary, which the actor can observe, and use whenever appropriate. The history of gesture is largely unrecorded. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* when a servant bites his thumb it is to show insolence.

VOICE:

The final piece of the actor's expressive equipment would be considered by many people the most important the voice, through which men and women share their passion, thoughts, intentions and reflections.

COSTUME:

Indian theatre emphasized the transcendental power of acting, the performers' ability to raise the audience's consciousness above the level of ordinary life to a spiritual awareness. The surface details of day-to-day living were not important in the theatre. Costumes, therefore, were not the clothes people wore every day, but decorative, ceremonial garments which symbolized the richness of spiritual life. The closest comparison with European costuming was the lavish, allegorical robes worn by actors in court masques.

Eastern Costume: Kathakali

Kathakali dancers still appear in India, performing parts of the great mythical plays which were the basis for Sanskrit drama. They wear sumptuous apparel which bears little or no realistic or historical meaning. The bodice is lavishly decorated, and brilliantly coloured skirts are worn over their trousers. They wear huge dome-shaped headdresses, sometimes with a kind of halo added, if they represent a God or Goddess. They do not wear masks, but have a thick decorative make-up, each with its own colour scheme and design.

Most male characters have long silver nails. The pupils of the eyes are reddened, heightening the dramatic expression and giving the performers a non-human appearance, as if they were dream characters from another world. When the art of theatre spread from India to China and other parts of Asia, this decorative and conventional form of costume was adopted with brilliant displays of colour, texture and shape, enhancing the actors' appearance and giving them a power and significance greater than their ordinary selves.

In Japan, the two traditional forms of theatre, Noh and Kabuki are both associated with lavish, ceremonial costume which provides much visual appeal for the audience, and also reveals the significance of the characters. The costumes of Noh theatre are of a brilliance, elegance and luxury unparalleled elsewhere. Like those of the Indian dancers, they are ceremonial, bearing little relation to any realistic portrayal of the character. They are exquisitely made of silken robes, deriving from the clothes of the court, the military nobility and the priesthood, but gradually constituting a distinct variety of dress.

The actor must rehearse all costume business fully.

HATS- how to put them on and off without delaying the action.

GLOVES-must be handled with ease and familiarity.

SHOES - work with the real shoes as soon as possible to establish problems.

ASK-the wardrobe for these accessories.

TELL- the wardrobe what effect you want.

WORK - with actors to make them easy with accessories.

NB - Quick changes count as costume business.

Rehearse them fully!

MASK:

Unique among all the arts, theatre consists in presenting human behaviour directly. Actors often put on a disguise, changing their appearance from their normal selves. The effect of the disguise is, not only to present whatever character is being portrayed, but to protect the actor's identity, to signify to the audience that this is acting as opposed to real life. Since human beings express their thoughts and feelings most fully through the face, it has long been a theatrical tradition for actors to cover their faces with masks when performing. In Africa and in many parts of Asia, decorative masks are a striking feature of the performing arts, but in Europe, the mask has been much less important. Costume traditions have varied, too, from culture to culture.

MAKE-UP

Make-up is used to transform the actor's appearance to suit the character they are portraying. It plays a crucial role in creating an authentic look, especially when the character requires physical transformation (e.g., aging, creating fantasy creatures, or injury effects). Make-up also helps to enhance the actor's facial expressions and can work in combination with costumes and lighting to create the desired effect on stage. Beyond just covering imperfections, it can define a character's emotions, health, and social standing. For example, a character who is supposed to be unhealthy might have pale, sickly skin, while a powerful character might have bold, dramatic makeup to convey strength and presence.

DIFFERENT STYLES IN ACTING AS AN ART FORM

Acting is not a one-size-fits-all approach; there are various styles that an actor can adopt depending on the production and the director's vision. Some of the key acting styles include:

- **Realism:** This approach emphasizes portraying characters and situations as they would occur in real life. Actors in a realistic style focus on subtle emotional expressions and behavior, aiming for a natural and relatable performance.
- **Expressionism:** In this style, the actor emphasizes the emotional experience of the character, often through exaggerated gestures and voice. The goal is not to depict reality but to convey the inner turmoil and psychological states of the character.
- **Classical Acting:** Often associated with Shakespearean theatre, this style emphasizes the delivery of complex dialogue and verse. It requires strong vocal control and the ability to embody noble or tragic figures.
- **Physical Theatre:** This style focuses on movement and physicality to tell a story, often without relying heavily on dialogue.
- **Improvisational Acting:** In improv theatre, actors perform spontaneously, creating scenes without a script. This style requires quick thinking and a deep understanding of character dynamics and timing.

Each style demands different techniques and approaches, allowing actors to express themselves in a variety of ways.

VIOLENCE IN THE THEATRE:

Greek tragedies did not present violence on the stage. Instead, violent deeds, such as that of Oedipus, who scratched out his own eyes and blinded himself, were narrated by a messenger, the effect transmuted through his reaction and that of his hearers. Yet the theatre of Roman Empire presented spectacles of shocking violence and decadence, including gladiatorial displays and nudity.

The portrayal of violence in theatre has been a subject of debate throughout history. Violence, whether physical or verbal, can have a significant impact on the audience, and it must be handled with sensitivity and responsibility. Actors must ensure that any staged violence is choreographed and practiced to ensure the safety of everyone involved. On the other hand, the depiction of violence can also be a powerful tool for exploring themes of power, oppression, and human conflict.

In some productions, particularly those in the Theatre of Cruelty (as developed by Antonin Artaud), violence is used as a way to shock the audience into confronting uncomfortable truths about society. However, it is important that violence is contextualized within the performance and is not gratuitous.

NEED FOR CENSORSHIP

Censorship may be imposed in the theatre for several reasons, first is disapproval of the whole idea of theatre. Plato, the Greek philosopher, banned theatre in his ideal republic, because it was basically pretence, a falsehood. In Judaism, the second commandment 'Thou shalt not make false idols' can be understood to forbid, or at least to limit, the art of theatre. The Christian Church banned drama for many years. After the Reformation in the sixteenth century, Puritans re-imposed the ban wherever, and whenever, they had sufficient influence. The Islam religion also disapproved of theatre; its development was therefore slower in the Arab world, where Islamic control of culture was stronger.

When drama threatens the established authority in any community, popular comedy exaggerates and criticizes faults; it often turns the world topsy-turvy. For example in the Roman Catholic Church, a popular feast-day evolved amongst clerics called Feast of Fools, this endangered the authority of the established bishops. Politics of each nation has changed several times; the history of censorship provides a scale by which one can measure the strength and confidence of various monarchies and governments. For example, in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, he criticizes the ruling authority to prevent brutality and obscenity. Theatre is open to both these vices, because violence and sex are an integral part of drama. Thus, through dramatic stories, people can deal with their deepest thoughts and their most serious preoccupations.

MANAGING TIME AND SPACE

In theatre, time and space are two critical elements that influence the performance. Time includes the duration of the play, the pacing of scenes, and the way time is manipulated within the narrative (e.g., flashbacks, flash-forwards). Actors must be adept at adjusting their performances to match the rhythm and timing of the play. Space, on the other hand, refers to the physical area of the stage, the movement of actors within that space, and their relationship with the audience. Effective use of blocking (the positioning and movement of actors) is essential to make the performance dynamic and engaging. Managing time and space properly allows the actor to maintain the flow of the performance and create tension or release as required by the script.

UNIT V

MODERN THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE

Modern theatre and performance have experienced dramatic changes, particularly over the last few decades, largely due to technological advancements, cultural shifts, and innovations in artistic practices. These changes have led to a more diverse, immersive, and interactive approach to performance, where the lines between different art forms are increasingly blurred. The evolving nature of modern theatre offers a broader scope for artists to explore new ways of storytelling, deepen audience engagement, and address critical social, political, and cultural issues.

1. Experimentation with Form and Structure

One of the key changes in modern theatre is the shift toward non-linear and fragmented storytelling. Traditional, linear narratives have been replaced with more experimental structures that reflect the complexities of contemporary life, often evoking themes of alienation, identity, and societal breakdown. This approach mirrors how memories and emotions are processed in the mind, creating a sense of disorientation. Additionally, immersive and interactive theatre have risen in popularity, where the audience is no longer just a passive observer but becomes part of the story. These forms often involve direct audience participation, blurring the line between performer and spectator and challenging traditional theatre norms.

Modern theatre has also seen a fusion of different art forms, including dance, music, and visual arts. Hybrid performances integrate these elements, creating a more immersive experience where movement, sound, and visuals work together to enhance the narrative. This interdisciplinary approach offers a richer, multi-sensory engagement for the audience.

2. Diverse Perspectives and Representation

In recent years, modern theatre has shifted towards highlighting marginalized voices and underrepresented stories. This focus has brought greater attention to the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities, offering them a platform to share their narratives. Contemporary playwrights are working to ensure a more inclusive representation of human experience on stage.

Theatre is also becoming more inclusive in its exploration of diverse cultures, races, genders, and sexualities, reflecting a multicultural and globalized world. Plays like Lynn Nottage's *Sweat*, Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brothers Size*, and Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*

tackle themes of identity, intersectionality, and power dynamics. Additionally, modern theatre continues to address pressing social and political issues, challenging audiences to critically engage with topics like inequality, immigration, and justice.

3. Technological Integrations

Technology has greatly transformed modern theatre, with digital projections and multimedia elements enhancing the stage. These tools allow directors and designers to create immersive environments, complex visual narratives, and bring abstract ideas to life. Virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR) are also being incorporated, offering audiences new levels of interaction and immersion by transporting them to different times and places.

Moreover, social media and online platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube are now essential for storytelling, promotion, and audience engagement. Theatre companies use these platforms to connect with global audiences, while streaming services make performances accessible worldwide, expanding the reach of theatre like never before.

4. Physical Theatre and Movement

Modern theatre increasingly emphasizes physicality and movement, with actors incorporating the body as a central tool for expression. Physical theatre focuses on using movement such as dance, acrobatics, and aerial work to convey emotion and meaning, fostering a visceral connection with the audience. Contemporary theatre-makers push the boundaries by blending elements from circus arts, mime, and extreme sports. Companies like DV8 Physical Theatre and Complicité have pioneered this approach, merging movement, theatre, and multimedia to create powerful and innovative narratives.

5. Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity

Modern theatre increasingly embraces cross-disciplinary collaboration, with artists from fields like dance, visual arts, technology, philosophy, and science working together on innovative projects. These collaborations bring fresh perspectives, resulting in performances that explore new ideas and themes.

For example, scientists and theatre artists may explore scientific concepts through visual theatre, while philosophers contribute to plays that tackle existential and ethical questions. Theatre-makers are also experimenting with hybrid forms, blending genres and technologies to push the boundaries of traditional theatre and create unique, thought-provoking performances.

6. Globalization and International Exchange

Globalization has led to increased international collaboration and exchange within the theatre world. Theatre artists now work across national boundaries, drawing on influences from different cultures and traditions to create global narratives. This has led to the rise of intercultural theatre, where elements of various theatrical traditions are fused to create unique and innovative performances. The exploration of global issues such as migration, climate change, and social justice is also central to many modern productions, reflecting the interconnected nature of the contemporary world.

7. New Venues and Formats

Theatres are no longer confined to traditional venues. In recent years, there has been a rise in site-specific performances, where productions take place in non-traditional spaces such as parks, streets, museums, or abandoned buildings. These performances are often designed to engage directly with the location, making the environment an integral part of the storytelling. Similarly, pop-up and temporary venues are becoming more common, allowing performances to take place in unexpected or unconventional spaces, breaking down barriers between the performance and the audience.

Moreover, online and digital platforms have opened up new avenues for theatre, enabling companies to reach a broader audience, offer virtual performances, and engage with global communities in real-time.

8. Changing Role of the Audience

In modern theatre, the role of the audience has shifted from passive observation to active participation. Audience interaction has become an integral part of many productions, with theatres experimenting with ways to involve spectators directly in the performance. Whether through immersive theatre, interactive elements, or the use of digital platforms, the audience is no longer merely an observer but an active participant in the creation of meaning.

9. Impact of Digital Culture

Finally, the rise of digital culture has had a profound effect on modern theatre. The influence of social media and online platforms extends beyond marketing and promotion, influencing the content, form, and structure of theatre itself. Digital tools allow theatre-makers to experiment with new forms of digital storytelling, pushing the boundaries of traditional theatre by integrating interactive technology, video, and online engagement into the performance process.

REACTION AGAINST THE THEATRE OF ILLUSION

There was a movement to counter the representation of actuality on the stage. Its earliest proponents were French and German. The anti-naturalists were part of a much larger movement that had its roots on the personal, emotional obsession of Romanticism. The new theatres were presentational in its staging, poetic rather than mundane in its language, symbolic rather than psychological in its characters.

- The non-illusionistic theatre has been dominated by the ideas and reputation of Gordon Craig. Another man to propagate the theory of non-illusionism was Antonin Artaud. Many theatres envisioned like presentational, theatrical, symbolist and expressionist theatre. Gordon Craig was neither the first nor the most innovative of the anti-illusionists. The honour probably belongs to Adolphe Appia.
- Adolphe Appia built upon Richard Wagner's idea of total theatre and combined it with his own highly original perception of the theatrical possibilities of light. He sensed that the interaction of three-dimensional forms, including the living actor with light could produce an entirely theatrical image. The use of controlled incandescent light is surely one of the outstanding instances of the effects of technology on theatrical art. Appia grasped the implications of the new means of providing focused, controlled light living light as a living element of theatrical production. It was Appia who most successfully argued for three-dimensional or architectural, scenery to replace the much older painted scenery in two-dimensions. Appia was a visionary and a mystic.
- Gordon Craig was a literary propagandist; he was preaching innovation at a time when most European theatre was making money on something far less adventurous. Like Appia, Craig sensed the value of controlled light, both for its ability to mould three-dimensional forms and for its ability to create mood. As a theatre practitioner Craig advocated single-artist dominance. That single artist, of course was Craig as director, designer and interpreter of the text. Craig's objection to literary men in the theatre was healthy; his utter rejection of collective creation is questionable. Craig advocated the creation of an uber-morio-netle to replace the actor, a carefully articulated, perfectly responsive mechanical man to respond to the director-designer's needs. Craig was an outspoken innovator. He outlived the general acceptance of his ideas by more than three decades and people live with theatre that has completely adopted Craig's theories of design, of lighting and of intense pictorial presentation of dramatic images.
- The first work of Maurice Maeterlinck was hardly a fitting answer to illusionists as Shaw, Becque, Chakhova and Ibsen. Maeterlinck's plays enjoyed some reputation

during their day, especially *Pelleas and Melisande*, *The Death of Tintagiles*, *The Bluebird* and *Death*.

- The plays' terrible vagueness would seem to render irrelevant and dull but as an antidote to naturalism. they were a significant change, their language spare and indirect, their characters motivated by symbolic forces beyond their intellectual control, their settings intentionally unreal.
- Maeterlinck's plays tend to be inactive, his characters passive; mere attempts to sustain moods, emotional states and portentous situations.
- Other non-illusionistic dramas were the symbolic plays of Strindberg Strindberg's plays – *The Ghost Sonata*, *The Dream Play*, and *The Damascus Plays* used conscious symbolism. Strindberg influenced many playwrights of the so-called expressionist movement. Georg Buechner's anachronistic Woyzeck had a profound influence on German playwrights who found contemporary significance in its nonlinear structure; its cinematic cuts from scene to scene, its symbolism, and its pathological, antiheroic protagonist.
- The principal exponents of Expressionism were George Kaiser and Ernst Toller. Most important expressionistic dramatist was Eugene O' Neill, his plays – *Dynamo*, *The great God Brown*, and *The Hairy Ape*.
- The common elements of all these plays were symbolic externalization, in acting, setting and incident of the inner emotional content and the inner psychology of characters and action.
- An expressionist play centred on a little protagonist, and typically it showed him in conflict with or at the mercy of, a machine like government.
- As a practicable theory of dramaturgy, expressionism lasted for only a very short time. But as a more general expression of distaste of illusionism and a sense that the theatre could deal in non-logical symbolism, its tendencies can still be seen.

EXPRESSIONISM AND DRAMATIC SYMBOLISM

Expressionism and dramatic symbolism are two theatrical movements that emerged in the early 20th century, particularly in Europe. While they share some similarities, they also have distinct differences:

Focus of Expressionism:

The primary focus of Expressionist theatre was to expose the inner lives of characters, often using exaggerated, distorted, and symbolic methods to represent the emotional extremes

of the human experience. This form of theatre rejected the notion of realistic, objective portrayal of life, and instead sought to reflect subjective experiences those that could not be fully captured by realism. Expressionist plays often delved into themes such as identity crisis, alienation, and psychological torment, reflecting the mental and emotional states of characters rather than their outer realities.

Techniques of Expressionism:

- **Exaggerated Characters and Actions:** Expressionist theatre utilized hyperbole in its portrayal of characters. The behaviour of characters was often exaggerated to represent broader social or psychological conditions. Characters could be symbolic representations of particular aspects of society or the human psyche. This exaggerated acting style was not about realism but about communicating deeper truths about the character's internal world.
- **Distorted Set Designs and Unrealistic Lighting:** The use of distorted set designs and unrealistic lighting was essential in creating the emotional landscape of the play. The set might be abstract, with jagged shapes, fragmented pieces, or oppressive environments that communicated feelings of alienation or entrapment. Lighting was used to emphasize emotional states rather than illuminate a scene in a realistic manner. Stark contrasts, shadows, and harsh lighting effects might reflect the inner turmoil of the characters or the darker forces at play.
- **Non-linear and Fragmented Narratives:** Expressionist plays were often characterized by non-linear plots, fragmented sequences, and broken dialogues. These techniques were designed to represent the fractured, chaotic experience of modern life. The traditional, cohesive narrative was replaced with a fragmented structure that mirrored the disjointed experiences of the characters, capturing a sense of instability and psychological unease.

Key Works and Authors:

- **Georg Kaiser:** A leading Expressionist playwright, Kaiser's works often explored the psychological and emotional states of individuals in conflict with oppressive social systems. For example, his play *From Morn to Midnight* portrays a man who seeks to escape the alienation of his life and, in doing so, spirals into increasingly irrational behavior.
- **Franz Kafka:** Though Kafka is often associated more with existentialism and absurdism, his works such as *The Trial* and *The Metamorphosis* share many Expressionist themes. Kafka's characters are often caught in incomprehensible, absurd

situations that mirror the alienation and powerlessness of the modern individual. The bureaucratic nightmare and the sense of being trapped in an unyielding system evoke the psychological alienation central to Expressionism.

Focus of Dramatic Symbolism:

Dramatic Symbolism, which gained prominence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was rooted in the belief that art should express the unknowable, the mystical, and the spiritual through symbolism and metaphor rather than direct depiction. Symbolism emerged primarily in France, as a reaction against the naturalism and realism that dominated theatre at the time. Rather than focusing on objective reality or psychological depth, Symbolist playwrights sought to evoke rather than explain, using imagery and mood to convey the mysteries of human existence.

While Expressionism focused on the psychological and emotional dimensions of human experience, Dramatic Symbolism sought to address the spiritual and metaphysical realms. Symbolists believed that reality could not be captured in a direct, literal way, but rather, the mystical aspects of life those beyond the reach of reason and scientific explanation could be expressed through symbolism. The works of Symbolist playwrights often explored the unconscious, dream states, mythology, and spiritual realms, depicting the mysteries of life through a language of metaphor, suggestion, and mood rather than straightforward narrative.

Techniques of Dramatic Symbolism:

- **Symbolism and Metaphor:** Symbolist plays utilized symbols and metaphors to convey deeper meanings. These symbols were not meant to be understood literally but as representations of broader existential or spiritual truths. For example, a character's journey could symbolize the human quest for enlightenment, or a storm might represent inner turmoil.
- **Mood and Atmosphere over Plot:** Rather than relying on traditional linear plots, Symbolist theatre placed a greater emphasis on creating a mood or atmosphere that encapsulated the theme of the work. The plot might be sparse or ambiguous, but the symbolic meaning behind the events was far more important. These plays often had a dream-like or otherworldly quality, with an emphasis on emotional rather than rational experiences.

Key Works and Authors:

- **Maurice Maeterlinck:** One of the leading figures in Symbolist theatre, Maeterlinck's work *Pelléas et Mélisande* is a quintessential example of Symbolism. The play is rich

with symbolic imagery, with the mysterious setting and interactions between the characters reflecting the ineffable forces that shape human existence. The work is infused with a dream-like atmosphere and explores themes of fate, destiny, and the unknowable depths of the human soul.

- **August Strindberg:** Strindberg's *A Dream Play* is another prime example of Symbolist theatre. The play takes place in a dream-like world where reality and illusion blur, and the protagonist's suffering is portrayed through vivid **symbolic imagery**. The play's fragmented structure and the mystical, intangible quality of the world created a space for exploring deep spiritual and psychological themes.

STAGE DESIGN IN THE MODERN WORLD

Stage design in the modern world has undergone a dramatic transformation, embracing a wide range of styles, materials, and technologies that cater to evolving audience expectations and artistic ambitions. One of the most prominent trends is the rise of immersive and interactive sets, where the boundaries between performer and audience blur. These sets often feature movable parts, projection mapping, or virtual reality elements to create dynamic, engaging experiences that allow the audience to become part of the performance. Sustainability is also a key focus, with eco-friendly practices such as the use of recycled materials, energy-efficient lighting, and waste reduction becoming central to modern design.

Technology plays a crucial role, with digital integration such as projection mapping, LED screens, and automated systems enhancing the visual and sensory experience of a performance. The collaborative process is another hallmark of contemporary stage design, with directors, playwrights, designers, and technicians working closely together to create a cohesive and impactful visual language. Flexibility is essential, as modern sets are designed to be adaptable, able to accommodate different performances, venues, and touring schedules.

In some cases, found spaces or site-specific designs are used to blur the lines between theatre and environment, creating a more authentic and immersive experience. Designers are also experimenting with new materials and techniques, such as 3D printing, to push the boundaries of traditional stage construction. Accessibility is prioritized in modern stage design, with features like wheelchair ramps, audio descriptions, and relaxed performances ensuring that theatre remains inclusive for all audiences.

The fusion of disciplines is increasingly evident, with elements from dance, visual art, and architecture coming together to create unique, multidisciplinary environments. Some

productions also incorporate virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), taking stage design to new dimensions and enhancing audience engagement. Modern stage design draws inspiration from global influences, reflecting the interconnected nature of contemporary theatre, while also embracing ephemerality using temporary or disposable materials to create fleeting but powerful experiences. Ultimately, storytelling through design has become central, with visual elements used not only to enhance the narrative but also to deepen character development and emotional resonance. These trends highlight the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of stage design, as it continues to adapt to new technologies, artistic visions, and cultural shifts.

LIGHTING IN THE MODERN WORLD

Lighting in the modern world has evolved significantly, integrating advanced technologies and design principles aimed at improving functionality, aesthetics, and sustainability. A major focus has been on energy efficiency, with the widespread adoption of LED bulbs, OLEDs, and smart lighting systems that not only reduce energy consumption but also allow for remote control and monitoring. In line with this, sustainable design is becoming a key consideration, with lighting fixtures being crafted from recyclable materials to minimize waste and reduce environmental impact.

The advent of smart lighting has revolutionized how we interact with our environments, with wireless connectivity, sensors, and integration with smart home systems enabling automated control of lighting to optimize both energy usage and ambiance. In a similar vein, human-centric lighting aims to mimic natural daylight patterns, promoting well-being, comfort, and productivity by aligning lighting design with the body's circadian rhythms.

Innovations in architectural lighting are pushing the boundaries of design, with fixtures that serve as both functional lighting and visually stunning design elements, transforming spaces. Moreover, new business models like Lighting as a Service (LaaS) provide comprehensive solutions, including installation, maintenance, and upgrades, making high-quality lighting more accessible and adaptable.

Technologies like Li-Fi and optical wireless communication are making it possible to use light for high-speed internet connectivity, while quantum dot technology enhances color accuracy and brightness, improving both lighting and display systems. Horticultural lighting is also gaining importance, offering specialized solutions for sustainable agriculture and plant growth. Meanwhile, light art and installations are being used in immersive and interactive experiences, blurring the lines between lighting and artistic expression.

Modern lighting is also being designed with health and wellness in mind, addressing concerns such as migraines, insomnia, and seasonal affective disorder through targeted lighting solutions. In public spaces, safety and security are enhanced through lighting systems integrated with surveillance and alarm technologies. The role of lighting in virtual and augmented reality environments is crucial, creating immersive experiences that engage users on a sensory level. Additionally, research into nanotechnology and metamaterials promises to revolutionize the future of lighting, offering even more efficient and versatile solutions. These advancements in lighting are not just changing the way we light our homes and cities but are also reshaping industries like healthcare, entertainment, and agriculture, offering new possibilities for energy-saving, aesthetic enhancement, and human-centered design.

WORD VERSUS SPECTACLES

The debate between “word” and “spectacle” in theatre revolves around the delicate balance between spoken language and visual elements in performance. Word places emphasis on the power of dialogue, text, and spoken language, prioritizing the playwright’s words, character development, and the actor’s ability to convey meaning through speech. Traditional plays and literary dramas are often grounded in the belief that language is the primary vehicle for emotional connection and storytelling, requiring the audience to engage intellectually and emotionally with the words being spoken.

On the other hand, spectacle emphasizes visual and sensory elements such as sets, costumes, lighting, and special effects. It prioritizes creating an immersive experience for the audience, often integrating music, dance, multimedia, and other visual storytelling techniques. Spectacle focuses on engaging the senses, offering a more visceral connection to the performance. This approach is often found in experimental, avant-garde, and contemporary works that break away from traditional dialogue-driven forms of theatre.

The tension between these two aspects arises from the differing ways in which they engage the audience and convey meaning. The word offers intellectual depth and emotional resonance through language, while spectacle creates an immediate, often emotional, reaction through visual and auditory stimuli. Over time, however, the boundaries between the two have become increasingly blurred. Many modern productions blend both word and spectacle, allowing for a dynamic and multi-layered experience that appeals to a wide range of audience sensibilities.

Productions such as Robert Lepage’s multimedia performances, which merge text with images and technology, and Cirque du Soleil, where acrobatics and visual spectacle

complement narrative and language, exemplify this integration. Similarly, The Wooster Group's experimental works often combine both elements in unexpected ways, creating rich, layered performances that draw from both the intellectual power of language and the emotional pull of visual spectacle. Ultimately, the debate between word and spectacle in modern theatre reflects the evolving nature of the art form, where artists continuously experiment with new ways of engaging audiences and enhancing the storytelling experience.